

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. SPECTER pertaining to the introduction of S. 3017 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements of Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. VITTER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2010

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to concur with an amendment to the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2847, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A House message to accompany H.R. 2847, an act making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice and Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid amendment No. 3310 (to the House amendment to the Senate amendment), in the nature of a substitute.

Reid amendment No. 3311 (to the amendment No. 3310), to change the enactment date.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise to talk about what I believe should be our top priority, almost our exclusive focus in terms of immediate work, and that is the issue of jobs and the economy. Doing so, I applaud the fact that finally as a body we are somewhat focused on that. We are debating a bill having to do with job creation, economic growth. But at the same time, I find it unfortunate, really sad, that as we take up that top agenda item for the American people we do so by taking up a bill of the majority leader, which is fine, but in a way under which he completely shuts out any opportunity for amendment on the floor of the Senate.

Again, I find that process really unfair and unfortunate. The fact that

every Republican idea, every Republican amendment is just being shut out is really frustrating, even angering to me as a Republican. But the issue isn't Republican and Democrat. The issue is what is good and right for the American people. The fact is that ideas and amendments on the Senate floor, which is supposed to be a place of unlimited debate, virtually unlimited ability to offer good ideas, to offer amendments, that is being completely subverted, and all amendments are being shut out.

Because of that, I am going to ask unanimous consent that we break out of that logjam, that we break out of that bitter partisanship and consider, with an open mind, one amendment I am bringing forward. But let me spend a few minutes outlining that amendment.

As we look on the job picture and the economy over the last year, as I talk about that job picture over the last year with folks in my State, I hear two dominant concerns. No. 1, we are still in a heck of a recession. The job creation that was promised a year ago with the stimulus just hasn't panned out. The promise of staying below 8 percent unemployment, minimizing that job loss, clearly, tragically, unfortunately never panned out. The President promised his stimulus would keep us below 8 percent. Unfortunately, as we all know, unemployment nationally went above 10 percent. Right now it still hovers near 10 percent, just a shade below that. And, again, unfortunately, the Federal Reserve has issued a report recently warning that sort of high level of unemployment would be with us for several years to come.

What I hear from Louisianans all around the State—and I would certainly trust what Members from every State of the Union hear in their home States—is that we need a better model to create jobs, to jump-start this economy, to get us out of this serious recession.

The other big theme and concern I hear all around Louisiana is: What are you all doing about this unsustainable level of spending and debt? I share that fear. I share that concern. Even as we struggle to get out of this recession—and we are not near there yet—I am fearful that the next economic crisis is coming based on spending and debt, unsustainable levels of spending and debt. We are near debt levels today comparable to where this Nation was at the end of World War II compared to GDP.

I don't like the idea of going into heavy debt for anything, but if we are going to do it as a nation, surely the reason we had with World War II, the need to build a modern Army overnight, unlike any military we had ever had before that, to defeat Hitler, to preserve freedom and democracy, literally our way of life, surely that reason is a pretty darn good one. That is why we as a nation went into debt, got up to 120 percent of GDP at the end of World War II.

The "greatest generation" that did that, that sacrificed and fought and won that war, turned around after the war and wiped away that debt, sent it down with great prosperity and fiscal restraint in the 1950s. But today we are nearing those same historic high levels of debt, with our overall debt now at about 100 percent of GDP, but, obviously, without the historical circumstances such as we had in World War II.

The other thing we don't have is that plan to get rid of it, that determination to reverse course and get our fiscal house in order because we don't have that plan either. In fact, we are in a huge fiscal debt hole, and we have not even stopped digging. In fact, the only thing this administration and this liberal Congress have done in the last year is to put down the shovel digging and used a backhoe instead, specifically to pass a budget that takes that historically high level of debt and doubles it in 5 years and triples it in 10 years.

In the face of those two enormous challenges, we need to create jobs much more effectively than we have in the last year, and we need to get spending and debt under control.

I proposed last March legislation that I and my cosponsors called the no-cost stimulus act. The no-cost stimulus act is about just that, creating great American jobs, stimulating the economy, helping us get out of this recession, using a fundamentally different model than the last year, at no cost to the taxpayer, not continuing to drop hard-earned taxpayer dollars out of helicopters—a fundamentally different approach at no cost to the taxpayer.

In fact, it will produce new Federal revenue and lower our level of deficit and debt.

How do we do that? We do it by focusing on our domestic energy sector, by opening access to domestic energy we have in great quantities in this country, by decreasing our reliance on foreign sources and creating great American jobs in the process. Again, we do this by opening access to our tremendous energy reserves we have.

We are the only country on Earth that has major, significant energy resources but that puts 95 percent of them off limits under Federal law and says: No, no, no, no, you cannot touch that. You cannot touch 95 percent of our domestic energy resources.

We need to change that both to improve our energy situation and to create good American jobs because the answer on the energy front is not either/or. It is not either drill for traditional sources, such as oil and gas, or develop new technology, new research and development. The American people know it is not either/or; it is all of the above, and we need to do all of the above aggressively.

This bill fits right into that commonsense, all-of-the-above mentality of the American people. We open access to domestic energy reserves. We produce